



News Release

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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IDWR CREATES WEB SITE, SETS FORMAT FOR RATHDRUM PRAIRIE MORATORIUM PUBLIC MEETING

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A special website has been created and the format set for public information meetings later this month on a petition asking that Idaho impose a moratorium on new groundwater rights for the Rathdrum Prairie aquifer, the Idaho Department of Water Resources said today.

IDWR has set a pair of public meetings for September 17th in Hayden Lake. The meetings are designed to give area residents the chance to tell IDWR how they feel about the petition, which was filed with the agency last spring by four environmental groups.

The website – www.idwr.state.id.us/Rathdrum – provides background information about the petition. It also provides links to Idaho statutes involved in the case and provides a way to file comments on the petition with IDWR by email.

The two meetings will be from 2-5 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. on September 17th at the Idaho Transportation Department conference room, 600 West Prairie St., in Hayden Lake. Norm Young, IDWR Water Management Division administrator, will conduct the meetings.

IDWR officials say the public information meetings are not formal hearings so cross-examination of those making statements will not be allowed. People who wish to make comments will be required to sign up in advance at the door and to indicate whether they support or oppose the petition.

The four environmental groups that filed the petition will be first on the list of speakers. The four groups will have a total of 30 minutes in which to make their statements.

After the petitioners are finished, current plans then call for each person to have five minutes in which to state their position. However, water managers say that could be reduced to three minutes depending on the number of people who request to speak.

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IDWR is encouraging groups of individuals to select a speaker who can best articulate their group position. This can help make it possible for more people to tell IDWR where they stand on the petition, officials said.

Ultimately, the decision will be determined by factual information in the case record relative to the legal requirements for establishing a moratorium outlined in Idaho Code Sec. 42-1805(7). These requirements include: the need to protect existing vested water rights; ensure compliance with the provisions of Chapter 2, of Title 42 of Idaho Code; and the prevention of violations of minimum stream flow provisions of the Idaho Comprehensive State Water Plan.

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